

**Date:** Feb. 12, 2025

**Subject:** Written Testimony in Favor of **HB0400** – State Finance – Prohibited Appropriations – Magnetic Levitation Transportation System (Cross-file **SB0055**)

**To:** Chairman Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and Members of the Maryland House Environment and Transportation Committee

**Description of Bill:**

House Bill HB0400 would prohibit the State and certain units and instrumentalities of the State from using any appropriation for a magnetic levitation transportation system in the State, and provide that the prohibition does not apply to certain expenditures for salaries.

**Testimony:**

I am writing in support of HB0400, sponsored by Delegates Williams, Bartlett, Chang, Fennell, Healey, Ivey, Martinez and Rogers.

Why do I support this bill? The state's transportation funding is facing limitations. Funding needs to be allocated toward urgent and practical projects – those that will benefit Maryland citizens – the taxpayers who pay for these projects. The transportation needs of the state and its residents are for effective, affordable, and accessible commuter options – not an overpriced, limited-access train for wealthy travelers, most of whom are not Marylanders.

Secondly, BWRR and Northeast Maglev have stated they want to be able to access state funding “if” they need financial funding later in their project. Two points: 1) projects of this size always have cost overruns, and 2) they are currently facing loss of federal funding. These two points will lead BWRR and Northeast Maglev to be knocking on the proverbial “door” of the state Comptroller on a regular basis if this legislation is not passed.

BWRR is currently seeking funding from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act funds and possibly other grant sources at the federal level but their federal funding has been fully expended at this point. State funds should serve the greater good of **Maryland** residents.

My concern is that if this project were to ever begin, it will run out of funding over and over again, will be over budget continuously, will continuously ask the state for untenable amounts of funding, and the result will be that our financial resources and precious land will be seriously compromised for an unneeded project that benefits only the wealthy. And our land – a precious natural resource – will be forever damaged.

Thirdly, building the Maglev train would irreparably harm the environment and our increasingly scarce natural resources of forests and waters. Currently, the NEPA process has been paused on this project. Significant work needs to be done to move this project to the next level. However, the federal funding to allow this is not in place.

BWRR has not, thus far, been able to demonstrate to the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) that the construction of this project will meet MDE's requirements for protecting our waterways, a precious natural resource. Based on recent research, the construction of the SCMaglev will generate more greenhouse gases than it will save for likely several decades. We do not have decades to wait for such a "possibility". In addition, the project will destroy hundreds of acres of wild green spaces including a forest preserve, wetlands and wildlife refuge, all of which are needed for CO2 storage, clean air and water, and climate cooling.

In conclusion, this bill would protect the state from losing funding for needed transportation and infrastructure projects that serve the rank and file citizens and it would protect Maryland's natural resources.

I ask that HB0400 be given a favorable vote and moved out of committee.

Sincerely,

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